

Maryland State Fire Marshal

News Release

Larry Hogan
Governor

Brian S. Geraci
State Fire Marshal



STATE FIRE MARSHAL REMINDS ALL MARYLANDERS OF FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY ISSUES DURING THE UPCOMING WINTER STORM

STATEWIDE (January 20, 2016) – The potential impact of the coming winter storm may cause disruption in electrical service to our homes. State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci is cautioning residents when using alternative light and electrical sources during power outages. ***“These easy to follow tips will help all Marylanders avoid injury or death during possible power outages,”*** said the State Fire Marshal.

- Use flashlights during power outages instead of candles. Keep plenty of fresh batteries on hand at all times. If you prefer the look of candles, consider flameless battery operated candles that offer the flickering light without the potential fire hazard.
- If using candles, make sure they are placed on a stable piece of furniture in sturdy holders that will not tip over. Candles should fit in the holders securely and the holders should be made of material that will not burn.
- Keep candles away from anything combustible, such as; clothing, books, papers, curtains, decorations or anything else that can burn.
- Do not place candles where they can be knocked over by children or pets.
- Always extinguish all candles when leaving the room or before going to sleep.
- Never use candles, matches or lighters if medical oxygen therapy is used in the home.
- Check portable electric heaters for frayed/damaged wires and ensure they are clean and placed on a flat level surface. Use only “listed” by an approved testing laboratory equipment and follow manufacturer’s instructions.
- Do not use extension cords with portable space heaters. The extension cord can overheat and cause a fire. Always plug the cord directly into the outlet.
- If you use kerosene fuel fired heaters, use only “K-1” kerosene fuel. Never fill the unit inside, remove it to the exterior after it has cooled before refueling.
- Open a window enough to provide proper ventilation for fuel burning appliances.

- Keep combustibles (furniture, curtains, clothing, paper goods, etc.), at least three feet from all heat sources.
- Fuel burning appliances can produce the deadly, tasteless and odorless gas known as carbon monoxide. Install and maintain CO alarms inside your home to provide an early warning of carbon monoxide.
- Always turn off portable heating equipment when leaving the room for extended periods. Portable heaters should never be operated unattended.
- If you are depending on portable generators for electricity during power outages, use extreme caution when refueling. Fuel splashed on a hot muffler could ignite, causing severe burns and serious injuries.
- Never attempt to refuel a generator while it is running. Always allow the unit to cool before attempting to refuel.
- Operate generators outside of the home and outside of garages. Carbon monoxide gas produced by operating generators is poisonous and can quickly cause severe injury or death.
- Ensure placement of the generator does not allow carbon monoxide to enter the home through windows, doors or other openings.

Please make every attempt to reach out to elderly family members and neighbors to ensure they are prepared and safe as well. Offer to pick up essential items and test their smoke alarms and CO detectors. Remove snow and ice from around the exterior doors in case a quick escape is necessary.

During and after the storm, please try to clear snow away from fire hydrants in your neighborhood to help ensure quick access by the fire service if needed. Additionally, monitor your own health by drinking plenty of fluids and take appropriate breaks to avoid over exertion issues.

The State Fire Marshal offers one final tip that is just as important. ***“Make sure your home is equipped with working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. These early notification devices are some of the most effective fire and life safety tools for preventing injury or death from fire and carbon monoxide poisoning”.***

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The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at:

www.firemarshal.mdsp.gov and/or <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.

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